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DARKNESS AT NOON IN AMERICAN COLLEGES

By E. Merrill Root

The battle of Waterloo may or may not have been won on the playing fields of Eton, but the battle of Freedom is certainly being lost in the classrooms of America. American colleges and universities, with few exceptions, are devoted to the dogmas that free enterprise is bad, that collectivism is good, that the trend toward the omnipotent state is "progressive". College faculties claim the right to teach such dogmas without criticism; they call this "academic freedom".

Unless some genial intellectual dynamite lifts the academic reactionaries of collectivism out of their fox-holes, we shall be educated into George Orwell's nightmare, *1984,* where Big Brother leers from every billboard, "doubletalk" vitiates every word, yesterday's newspapers are rewritten to make Yalta look good, and "thought-police" hunt down every Senator McCarthy and club every poet and prophet of individualism.

For, contrary to academic clichés, *the intellectual Left dominates American colleges today.* The apologists for collectivism try hard to hide this truth with platitudinous patter about conservatism in colleges. Professor H. H. Wilson of Princeton says that "intellectual slavery" (he means individualism) in colleges is "far advanced". Kalman Siegel (education reporter for the *New York Times*) talks about a "campus straightjacket". Their phrases are as phoney as Big Brother's slogans in *1984* — "War is Peace: Ignorance is Knowledge: Slavery is Freedom." They are stupidly ignorant — or they deliberately lie.

For *collectivism* is the blight of "intellectual slavery" already "far advanced" in American colleges; *socialism* is the "campus straightjacket". Collectivism is rampant in almost all colleges and universities in the U.S.; anyone who dares declare his faith in economic freedom and his hostility to the State (that "coldest of all cold monsters", said Nietzsche), is today an academic outcast. Colleges today are dominated by would-be People's Commissars for the Suppression of Wild Flowers.

I know American colleges and universities from the inside out to the outside in. And I affirm that (except for Roman Catholic, and a few small Protestant colleges), the academic climate is *aggressively collectivist.* It favors and fosters (as "liberal" and "progressive") all that socializes, collectivizes, encroaches; all that reduces the uncommon

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individual to the hideous caricature called "the Common Man". There is constant pressure — a parlor witch-hunt, a faculty-tea lynching party — on all who dare differ from what Ibsen called "the damned compact liberal majority".

TO PROVE THIS, I need only ask a few simple questions.

In what college will not the majority of faculty and students *immediately* — without debate or one grain of the salt of skepticism — damn William F. Buckley's monumental *God and Man At Yale?* In what college will not the name "McCarthy" immediately — without discussion or evidence — provoke a sneer and a smear? In what college will not each of these be immediately ridiculed and attacked? — the profit motive, the opposition of Pasadena parents to indoctrination by collectivists, *any* criticism of textbooks as the Pundits of Collectivism miswrite them, capitalism as such, Senator Taft, *Red Channels* or *Counterattack,* Whittaker Chambers (they still choose Hiss!), the McCarran Act, "Americanism"?

In what college will not the majority of the faculty support the "right" of the many Communist professors to abuse America, and not shout about "academic freedom" if these enemies of freedom are ousted?

In what college will not the majority furiously defend the mud-bespattered *White Book* of Acheson and Marshall? Not immediately denounce Chiang Kai-shek (as the patient spiders of the Party Line long ago conditioned them to do)? Or where will a majority of any faculty condemn Owen Lattimore, the IPR gang, the *Amerasia* conspiracy?

In what college are not students almost wholly conditioned into ignorance by the dogma that "economic determinism" explains politics, art, religion, morality, every choice of the human spirit?

In what college is not the literature of nihilism — the "realism" that reduced man to a spiritual amoeba thrusting out agonized pseudopodia in blind appetite for material things — dominant? Where is the literature that passionately teaches faith in life and in America?

Such questions can have only one answer — if you know colleges today. And this makes it terribly clear that, in teaching youth to walk intellectually, American colleges say: *"Use only your left foot!"*

THIS LEADS TO, and is proved by, some of the incredible common things that happen in American colleges today. Let me cite a few out of many.

Senator McCarthy addressed the students and faculties of several "blue-blood" men's and women's colleges in the Connecticut valley. Now the Senator may be wrong — he may be right. Certainly, until and unless you listen with an open mind you cannot evaluate his vision. Here the college audience, as reported by the press, greeted him with groans and boos (the usual illiberality of the "liberal"). They came not to listen but to slaughter.

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They met him with the *pre*judice that makes impossible the living truth of *post*judice. Senator McCarthy commented: "I don't mind it, I'm used to it. It's what I find at every college I visit." Such is the academic witch-hunt!

One of my students, after two years of study in the college where I teach, decided (during my sabbatical year) to try Vassar. She is politically one of the most realistic and informed students I have known; but, unhappily for Vassar, she is an American, a Republican and religious. At Vassar she found such things taboo. She was told by the New Inquisition that she was politically naive. She must "grow up", become orientated to the new day. Else how could Vassar graduate her?

The college paper, with the stereotyped conformity of contemporary colleges, published the usual stupid prejudiced review of *God and Man at Yale.* My student, at the request of a friend on the editorial staff, wrote a courteous, factual letter in rebuttal, which was published. She was called on the academic carpet and told that this would not do at Vassar. They could not graduate students who believed in God and man at Yale or, I assume, anywhere else. Fortunately, the victim of this characteristic collegiate pogrom was a fighter. She would not conform. She returned to Earlham, and was able to graduate, though she disbelieved in collectivism. But never at Vassar!

Or see the Iron Curtain descend on a great capitalist-founded, capitalist-supported Institute in Chicago.* There a teacher of English used Koestler's classic of anti-Communism, *Darkness at Noon.* He taught it as literature — fine art revealing reality. He had no intention of fighting Communism. He was himself a pacifist. Yet his head of department called him in and forbade him to use this universally recognized contemporary classic: the excuse was that he would "help bring about war with Russia". Such burning of the books, such Red Fascism, such sly noosing of literature in the Party Line, *recurs* in collegiate life today. But let a single collectivist book or professor be even mentioned in *Red Channels,* and a howl goes up from Boston to Belgrade, from Memphis to Moscow. "That" (as Corporal Nym would say) "is the humor of it."

Recently, while speaking at a great religious conference in the Middle West, I met the wife of a history professor at the University of Wisconsin. A charming, highly intelligent woman, she was herself anti-Communist. Yet when I mentioned *God and Man at Yale,* she said: "But it is a false book." How did she know? Had she read it? "No, but everyone in my academic circle tells me it is a tissue of hypocritical lies." I told her what the book is — a noble affirmation that criticizes most lucidly the collectivist and irreligious propagandas dominating academic life, and I am sure she returned to Madison to read it . . . though I prophecy trouble with the university library.

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*For the academic survival of the culprit, I cannot name him or his college.

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Symptomatic of our collegiate climate is the remark I heard a prominent religious leader make in a college chapel. He wished that "there were two or three Communists on every college faculty" — to "stir up the thinking" of the students. This characteristic bathos was wholly congenial to the characteristic college audience. Neither the speaker nor his audience had the slightest concrete realization of what a Communist is, or what sort of "ideas" a Communist *can* "stir up" when all he has are carbon copies of directives out of Moscow. Few in the audience knew the A B C of Communism — that it is a militant conspiracy using the most convenient lie until, by power politics, it can infiltrate, seize, consolidate, and *become* the State. Even with Czechoslovakia and China as case-histories of the murder of freedom, this babe-in-the-woods could believe his own folly and win credence for it.

BEHIND THE SCENES, as always, lurk the few malignant, militant Communists who know what they do. They flatter the piper and call the tune. The mass of college teachers — naive, but supposing themselves sophisticated; enslaved, but seeing themselves as free; reactionary, but imagining themselves "liberal" — pull the collective chestnuts out of the fire.

What is their motivation? Partly a vague desire to "do good" to "humanity". Partly a rootlessness, a sense of separation from life, the modern distemper of secular nihilism — a divorce from God and man. But most largely, it is a need for compensation for their own rootlessness — which makes them wish to be "intellectual", "modern", "advance guard", "sophisticated", "liberal", "clever and smart". A terrible constant pressure conditions professors to conform to this sophisticated nihilism, to prove that they are "enlightened" by accepting this iron curtain.

If a teacher in an American college today declares himself for a free economy, for militant anti-Communism, for a living love for America, for the individual against the State, for the true conservatism (which is the true radicalism) of pulling weeds up by the roots and rooting the good grain more firmly, he will find his students hostile and his colleagues critical. He may be ostracized, kept from promotion, ridiculed, smeared, even purged. He will be as great and lonely a figure in the collegiate world as Buckley and Chambers are in the literary world.

When will the American people waken to the academic status quo? Only they can change it — by refusing to send their sons and daughters to places where they will be deliberately infected with the polio of collectivism. What we need is a new revolution of 1776 — against the Tories of Collectivism, the Red Coats of Socialism. Until then, American colleges will remain factories turning out robot collectivists, centers of darkness at noon.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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The Race: The Illinois governor has demonstrated that he is a master of political maneuver and will probably emerge the victor in the November election — such is the view of many Washington observers. They cite, with admiration, the deftness with which Stevenson separated himself from Truman and "Trumanism", and manipulated the nearest thing to a draft in political history. His political expertness stands in contrast to the obvious inexperience of General Eisenhower. And, while some party scars remain after his nomination in Chicago, it is generally conceded here that the Democratic Party is in better condition than the Republican.

A shift among the opinion formers is discernible. Since the General arose to political success in no small measure through the exertions of the press in his behalf, it is interesting to note that many of these erstwhile acolytes are presently moving over to the Stevenson altar. Thus, the *New York Post,* an early enthusiast for the General, has changed its mind, now finds his speeches "dreary" and comes out flatly for Stevenson. Other commentators have similarly cooled off on the subject of Eisenhower and are openly or covertly for Stevenson. (This situation was forecasted frequently by Taft supporters last spring.)

In view of Eisenhower hopes for winning the key state of New York, the *Post's* stand commands attention. That paper is regarded as wielding great influence among the mass of Jewish voters. The negro vote, it is believed, has turned against Ike for his support of FEPC. The Liberal Party, which derives its strength from the garment workers in New York City is expected to support Stevenson. The Progressive Party, a fellow-traveller organization, will support neither Ike nor Stevenson. However, its vote falls short of 200,000. It is recalled that Wallace, as Progressive candidate in 1948, received 500,000 New York ballots and thereby enabled Dewey to take the state's electoral vote by a small margin.

Veteran observers here take a dim view of Ike's chances — unless he wages a "fighting campaign". His brief, colorless comment on the nomination of Stevenson does not suggest such a campaign. But if he should lash out, the Democrats are believed to be ready for him with some lively rebuttals, based on records hitherto inaccessible to the public.

GOP Split: From a well-placed and cool-headed professional observer in the Middle West we receive the following word: "I have just read your letter on the chances of healing the Republican rift. I think you minimize the bitterness of the rank and file of Republicans. Around here, I have never seen the like of it. In my opinion, the regular Republican is not going to take Dewey and Eisenhower, no matter if his opponent is a New Dealer. I think we are going to see an historic 'walk' by millions. A Democrat of high standing tells me that Eisenhower may reach a new peak of popularity by the end of September, and that from then on he will go down faster than a roller coaster. I doubt that he'll reach that peak."

We hear that one mass magazine in New York, which had supported Ike, received a post-nomination mail in which the bitter letters of Taft supporters exceeded the enthusiastic letters of Ike supporters. The *Chicago Daily News* after the nomination of Eisenhower (which they had supported), saw fit to open its letter column to the disgusted expressions of pro-Taft readers. As for the *Chicago Tribune,* newsmen

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recall that the McCormick paper once before, in 1932, "sat out" a presidential campaign. Reading the *Tribune* editorial of July 27 leaves more than one reader with the feeling that the paper believes that it would be better for the American people if Stevenson were elected.

Even if much of the above were discounted, we cannot dismiss so easily what we hear from Middle West party workers. One said to us: "Of course, I'll vote for Eisenhower. But nothing I can say like that has any effect on the rank and file. They say they won't support the Presidential nominee — and that's that. I guess I'll just work harder for the local candidates." Such talk from party workers, any politico will recall, has usually, in the past, presaged a "walk" in November.

The South: After Chairman Sam Rayburn had nicely arranged matters, the Democratic Convention voted to allow Virginia delegates to be seated. Press and radio commentators described this as a victory for the South. Actually, it was the reverse — it was a defeat for the South.

Not every Southern delegate went to Chicago in the hope that he or she would be expelled. But the fact is that those Southern leaders who had sought to create a real sectional policy in recent years certainly hoped that the Convention would provide an excuse for a bolt. When the "loyalty" amendment was offered, these leaders obviously anticipated with pleasure that it would end in disbarment. They could, as a result, return to their states, say the Yankees had "thrown them out" and proceed to elect their own Southern candidate, on an independent ticket, somewhat as in 1948. Their separatist votes might then land the election in the House of Representatives, and they might emerge from it with at best a President, at least a much more satisfactory bargaining position.

But the Administration, via Rayburn, slyly boxed them. In the end, the Southerners left the Convention — not covered with glory, as most of the press depicted, but a very dissatisfied bunch of people. As they left Chicago, Walter Trohan, writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, reported: "Southern cohorts were smoldering. Smathers said Russell had been a victim of a deal. 'I don't know where the hell we'll go', said Governor Battle of Virginia. Governor Kennon of Louisiana and Governor Byrnes of South Carolina expressed similar sentiments. What action the South will take will come when delegations return home and measure Stevenson's 'liberal' record against their hope and desires. The threat of a split was still in the air."

For those in Washington who know the political South, the reasons for this frustration are easy to see. Actually, all the South got out of the convention was the right to sit on the Convention floor. They also got a Northern New Dealer for presidential nominee, and a Southern New Dealer in second place. That is a long way from the convention of 1932, when they were given their favorite, Jack Garner.

To bring out how far they failed, it is necessary to list the three matters on which they wanted satisfaction in Chicago. Senator Byrd stated them in his important speech in Selma, Alabama, last spring. They were: (1) elimination of any FEPC plank; (2) a states' rights plank; (3) restoration of the two-thirds rule in conventions. (This is the rule which for a century enabled the Southerners to hold a veto over any candidate.)

At Chicago last week, the South got none of these. The "civil rights" plank was actually as strong as that in 1948, although it contained no reference to FEPC by name. There was no apparent attempt to frame a states' rights plank. And, so far as anyone could determine, there was no discussion of the restoration of the two-thirds rule.

But what will they do? There is no certain indication. Four states have conventions in recess and a fifth is scheduled to hold its convention in September. Governor Byrnes, tight-lipped, simply said (July 28) that his state's convention will decide what course is to be taken, and Governor Kennon of Louisiana said there was "considerable uncertainty" as to whether the South would support the Democratic candidacy. Among Mississippi leaders, some advocate election of Eisenhower, but others endorse Stevenson. Neither course is exactly to Mississippi's taste.

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The recessing of conventions was designed well in advance to take care of dissatisfaction with the Convention. No observer cares to forecast what the Southerners will do. But many speculate that the South, noting the desire of the Ike forces to break into the South, as well as the furious efforts of the Administration to keep them in the party, will be tempted to exploit its balance of power.

Adlai the Articulate: When the Governor took the Democratic meeting by storm, he inspired such adjectives as "humble", "deprecating", "retiring", "modest" — but not the adjective "articulate". Yet that is the one frequently used here in Washington by those who knew him during his term in the State Department, especially in 1945. He was then found likeable, well-briefed, approachable and quite willing to talk at length to describe some of the State Department's contortions at the time. He was eloquent on the subject of the then new contraption, the United Nations. Those who talked to him found him clever and very communicative, to an extent which reminded them of the nothing-if-not-articulate Dean Acheson.

But here a distinction must be made. Adlai liked Alger Hiss, and so did Dean. (Adlai's apologia for his liking Alger — now hastily disseminated by the Democratic National Committee — is clever, yet for us, unconvincing.) But, because both Dean and Adlai liked Alger and turned not their backs to him, it does not signify that Dean and Adlai bear any such enduring affection for each other. We must report a belief here in Washington that Adlai was no friend or admirer of Dean. And so — whatever the reason for his coolness towards the present Secretary of State — people here are convinced that under no circumstances would Stevenson, if elected, retain the services of Acheson.

Indeed, Adlai may be saving an important — and popular — announcement for the campaign: that he will not, if elected, keep Acheson. Should that be so, the Democratic nominee would put his Republican opponent considerably on the spot. For, despite much needling in the primary campaign, Eisenhower managed to conceal his opinion of the Secretary of State. One newsie at Chicago told us that no less than three questions concerning Acheson were directed in one interview at the General, but he evaded all of them. Who was it that predicted a "fighting campaign"?

Air Force in Korea: While politicians maneuver, dissemble, connive, our heroic aviators do the best they can with inadequate and outdated materiel in Korea. We quote from a letter written by an officer:

"I wrote you before that if night fighters ever started hitting us the B-29 was through. Well, it has happened! Things went quite smoothly for a long time — a few ships hit by flak once in a while, but nothing serious. Recently things have started popping. One night we lost three bombers out of eleven. One had a direct flak hit in the bomb bay. The ship exploded, killing all aboard, including a group commanding officer. The other two were downed by fighters, one destroyed over North Korea, the other managing to limp into South Korea.

"The flak has suddenly become more intense and accurate and every night fighters are encountered. Most of the fighters have only made non-firing passes, but occasionally one opens up. Some of our boys have exchanged fire with them, but we are in reciprocating engines vs. jets. Also we have .50 calibres (machine guns) and they are using 37 mm. and 23 mm. (cannon) that are explosive. One hit of theirs can do major damage, while our fighters have to put a lot of holes in a ship before damaging it seriously.

"The question resolves itself into 'what are we going to do?' If the losses become too heavy, something has to be done. We don't have the stuff to adequately do the job. Even our jet 45 bombers we have here as reconnaissance can't compete with a MIG. We don't have an air force equipped for a modern war. A 93 wing air force equipped with piston engines isn't worth the paper it is written on against a jet air force. Our jets are inadequate except for the F-86. The F-84's that we are sending to Europe as our 'first line of defense' can't come near an F-86 and especially a MIG. The F-84's have fighter cover in Korea! Imagine our first line fighters having to have fighters to protect them from the

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enemy! Our production of F-86's just equals our combat attrition, so there are *none* for new wings in the states. So what happens? The President and Congress cut back production! Maybe you can explain it."

War and Peace: There is general agreement that neither candidate will debate the matter of foreign policy. Karl von Weigand, dean of American foreign correspondents, finds that both candidates fail to understand the basic world situation. Writing from Rome to the Hearst newspapers, last Sunday, that writer says: "Both Republican and Democratic candidates promise to make world peace their chief aim if elected President of the United States and at the same time assume the role of 'world leader'. Both candidates believe in the theory that 'war' can be 'scared' or 'frightened' into 'peace' with stupendous war preparations. History does not support that theory."

Both candidates were supporters of the Roosevelt and Truman foreign policies. Mr. von Weigand goes on to remark: "What does not seem to get into the heads of the usually so practical-minded American people is that the present grave situation is, after all, only the after effects of preceding causes, and that these causes in the main were the policies of America under Roosevelt and Truman. . . . Since the end of World War II seven years ago, the Western World has been plagued by amateur peace-seekers and peace-makers — and they are still with us. The proven incapacity and inability of governments to make peace after wars end and to seize the psychological moment to make it — has become a characteristic of this epoch of history. The theory that to let an armistice drift on for years makes eventual peace-making easier has been just another delusion. If war between America and Soviet Russia should come, it will be largely because of the negative peace-making policy of America in that seven-year period and in not making peace with Germany when it was best possible."

Von Weigand reports that Professor Hans von Hentig of Bonn University in his new book, *Der Friedensshluss,* calls the "concluding of peace" a "lost art". The author reviews the peace-makers and the spirit and technique of past centuries with the peace-making amateurs of today and their technique.

New Textbook: Our schools will soon be offered a new textbook "which takes a pro-American viewpoint of the nation's economy and attacks socialism and communism as twin paths of tyranny", according to Frank Hughes writing in the *Chicago Tribune* on July 17.

The book, which has just been announced, is *Understanding Our Free Economy* by Fred R. Fairchild, Knox Professor emeritus of economy, Yale University, and Thomas J. Shelly, economics teachers in Yonkers (N.Y.) high school. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co.) As Hughes explains it, the book is a preliminary answer to the complaints of thousands of parents and taxpayers of the country who have been charging that public high schools have been teaching socialism and communism in textbooks written from the collectivist point of view. "Ever since the New Deal Administration took office twenty years ago", says Hughes, "basic high school textbooks in social science, without serious exception, have been sympathetic toward New Deal doctrines and, in most cases, have contained outright indorsements of socialist and communist economic principles."

According to Hughes, the Fairchild-Shelly work is the first basic high school textbook of the last two decades which gives a real account of the failure and socialistic menace of the famous Tennessee Valley Authority. All others have dealt with this "experiment" in favorable terms. Additionally, reports Hughes, socialism, fascism and communism are "accurately portrayed" and the student is shown "how all these ideologies are destructive of freedom as Americans know it". The final chapter on "supergovernment, taxation and inflation shows how adoption of the Keynesian theory of compensatory spending, gigantic public debt and confiscatory income taxation has created inflation."

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